

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE FAS FOR G&F

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EAGR, HU
SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN HARVEST SITUATION 1977

1. ISTVAN MESZAROS GENERAL DIRECTOR FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN THE HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE BRIEFED AGATT ON JUNE 28 ON THE LATEST HARVEST SITUATION. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR POINTS MADE BY HIM.
2. PROSPECTS FOR SMALL GRAIN HARVEST WHICH HAS JUST BEGUN IN SOUTHERN HUNGARY LOOK GOOD. GRAIN IS MATURING ABOUT ONE WEEK AHEAD OF SCHEDULE DUE IN PART TO EARLIER COMPLETION OF FALL FIELD WORK UNDER THE IMPACT OF FAVORABLE WEATHER.
3. THE WHEAT CROP WINTERED EXCEPTIONALLY WELL BUT SPRING FREEZES DAMAGED SOME 50,000 HECTARES WHICH WERE RESWON TO CORN. DESPITE THIS DAMAGE WHEAT CROP STILL IS EXPECTED TO BE HARVESTED FROM 1.3 MILLION HECTARES AS APLNNED, BECAUSE FALL PLANTINGS OF WHEAT EXCEEDED THE PLANNED TARGET BY NEARLY 50,000 HECTARES.

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4. THE RECENT NATIONWIDE RAIN WAS EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL TO THE GRAIN CROP AND MESZAROS FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE SMALL GRAIN PORTION OF THE TOTAL GRAIN PRODUCTION TARGET (ABOUT ONE HALF OF 12.8 MIL TONS) WILL BE MET.
5. MESZAROS WOULD NOT VENTURE A FORECAST FOR THE CORN CROP SINCE HARVEST WAS STILL MORE THAN THREE MONTHS AWAY. HE SAID SPRING

PLANTINGS OF CORN DEVELOPED SOME DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF EXTENSIVE MOISTURE IN SOIL. ALTHOUGH TOTAL PLANTINGS OF CORN BOTH FOR GRAIN AND SILAGE CAME CLOSE TO PLANNED TARGET, PLANTINGS FOR GRAIN MAY HAVE COME ABOUT 60,000 HECTARES SHORT OF THE TARGET. HE EMPHASIZED HOWEVER THAT GIVEN REASONABLY GOOD WEATHER DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON HUNGARY COULD STILL MEET ITS CORN PRODUCTION TARGET.

6. HUNGARIAN AGRICULTURE THIS YEAR HAS TEN PERCENT MORE HARVESTING MACHINERY AT ITS DISPOSAL THAN LAST YEAR APPROACHING THE OPTIMUM. WITH THIS MACHINERY MASZAROS FELT THE SMALL GRAIN HARVEST COULD BE COMPLETED IN 12 TO 14 DAYS, A NEAR IDEAL SITUATION BASED ON HUNGARIAN CONDITIONS.

7. MESZAROS ALSO COMMENTED ON SOYBEANS. THIS CROP IS SLOW IN DEVELOPING AND THIS YEAR ONLY 32,000 HECTARES WERE PLANTED AGAINST 35,000 HECTARES A YEAR BEFORE. THE PROBLEM IS THE WORLD MARKET PRICE WHICH TENDS TO FAVOR CORN AT THE EXPENSE OF SOYBEANS. IN ORDER TO MAKE SOYBEAN PRODUCTION MORE PROFITABLE IN HUNGARY MOST OF THIS CROP WAS PLANTED ON IRRIGATED LAND FROM WHICH HOPEFULLY A 2.0 TON PER HECTAR YIELD CAN BE OBTAINED.

8. ON OTHER CROPS MESZAROS SAID THE SITUATION LOOKED ALSO MUCH BETTER THIS YEAR THAN LAST. BOTH THE SUGAR BEET AND POTATO CROP LOOKED VERY GOOD. VEGETABLE PRODUCTION, DUE TO VARIOUS MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT AND MORE FAVORABLE WEATHER WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECOVER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM LAST YEARS' POOR RESULTS. TOMATOES, PAPRIKA AND ONIONS LOOKED PARTICULARLY PROMISING. SOME FRUIT CROPS ON THE OTHER HAND SUFFERED BADLY FROM THE SPRING FREEZES PARTICULARLY APRICOT, CHERRIES AND NUTS.

9. COMMENTS: HUNGARY SET A 12.8 MIL TONS GRAIN TARGET FOR 1977. ABOUT 6.4 MIL TONS OF THIS TOTAL WAS ENVISAGED FOR A SMALL GRAIN CROP INCLUDING 5.0 MIL TONS FOR WHEAT AND ANOTHER 6.4 MIL TONS FOR CORN. BASED ON MESZAROS' ASSESSMENT IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE SMALL GRAIN CROP COULD REACH THE 6.4 MIL TON TARGET BUT THAT THE CORN CROP MAY FALL SHORT OF SOME 300,000 TONS OF THE SAME TARGET. THIS MEANS AT THIS TIME THAT HUNGARY'S TOTAL GRAIN PRODUCTION IN 1977 MAY COME TO AROUND 12.5 MIL TONS RATHER THAN TO 12.8 MIL TONS TARGET ENVISAGED.
BYRNE

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